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SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
HOLYOKE

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S: [softly] Do that. [background noises are heard] All righty. Um can we start out just with a little background about how you started working in the mills, and when and that kind of thing?

B: Well, wh-, when I started working in the mills. Let's see. I started at the uh, the Chemical Paper in nineteen hundred and fifty-two. And I started originally working on the platform, uh loading freight cars and trucks and things of that nature: and, of course, Chemical Paper, at that time, was one of the largest paper companies in the city of Holyoke. They had the Chemical Paper which had three, four [near?] and two cylinder board machines. That's five machines. And they also had two [spord?] machines at the Crocker-[McKellan], which was the other plant that they owned. And I worked on the platform for about, maybe, ohh, eight months or so; and then I got a job inside working on the paper machine, ahhh as a third hand on the paper machine; and that's (S: Mm) when I started to get my experience from working in a paper mill. I worked - at the time that I started, my machine tender just happened to be the president of the Papermakers' Union, a guy by the name of Ed [Brogel]. Soo that's how I got my education about unions, by working, you know, on the same machine as he did.

S: Right from the beginning.

B: Right from the very beginning, I got (S: Oh) indoctrinated. [both laugh]

S: So that's pretty unusual, probably, for people to have that kind of awareness that quick.

B: Yeah, yeah. Because, you know, work, but working with the union president, uh ehh, he was a real, you know, hard-nose union guy; and, uh anyone that worked for him, he made sure, you know, you adhered to all the rules; and, course, he was from the old school; and he taught me, you know, the way that the old time papermakers learned - not like they learn today, but

they, the way that the old timers learned. (S: And how is that different?) Oh boy! [laughs] [interviewer laughs softly] How is that different? When you started, in those days (working in the paper mill), you had to know everything that there was about a paper machine; you know, from the beginning to the end, you had to be able to identify what every roll did, what every eh calendar - you had to know your machine from beginning to end; and then, after you thought you knew it all, and you go through a test with the machine tender, then he'd drag you down the cellar and say: "Now I'll show you the paper mill." And he'd show you (S: Hm) e-each and every pump, and what that pump would do, and, you know, what happens when that pump malfunctions; what's the effects going to be upstairs, and that was, you know, that was the way that they learned them in the old days. They taught them so that they knew what the paper machine was. Today, no.

S: Must have, how does, how does that change the attitudes? I would think that would have big effect on how people feel about their work.

B: Oh yes. It had a, it had a very, you know, good effect on how you felt about your work, because i-in those days, you know, they were craftsmen. They took pride in everything that they did, and in everything that they made. [coughs] Excuse me. There's still some of that today, but not the way that it was in the old days. (S: Hm) And in the old days - like when I started, you know, and that's not really the old days - but it w-, it was the end of an era at that time, because a machine tender is responsible for the entire operation of the paper machine. Everything that happens he's responsible for.

S: All the way down. [Mr. Beaudry clears throat] (B: All the way down. That's (- -)) And the paper machine includes all the steps that (- -)

B: E-, all of the steps, starting from the wet end right down to the dry end, when the paper is finished. So he's responsible for the entire operation. The back tender, who is the next man in command, starts at the big section driers, and that's his responsibility. It still (S: Uh huh) all belongs to the machine tender, but that's where his (S: Uh huh) responsibility begins; (S: Uh huh) and he is responsible for the drying, the finishing and the caliper. That's his responsibility. (S: Uh huh) Then, when you get to the end of the machine, there is either some reels - uh that's where the third hand and the fourth hand, if there is one, that's where their responsibility begins, of unwinding the paper or emptying the boxes. And in the old days, when I started, I couldn't go down to the wet end of the machine unless I had the permission of the machine tender; [coughs] because, it was still a crafts trade, and they didn't want you to go down there and learn how to do their job. So, I couldn't go to the wet end of the machine unless the machine tender called me and said: "Ray, I want you down the wet end. Come on down." Then, I would go down. But otherwise, that was an unrestricted area for me, where I could not go.

S: Whoa! [drops something] [unclear]. When you say it was a crafts trade (- -)

B: That's right, the machine tenders' craft.

S: Was separate from everybody else? Or (- -)

B: The, the machine tender was the kingpin. He, he was the man, eh, you know, he could go to the boss, and say to the boss: "Hey, Beaudry's no good. Get rid of him. I want him off my machine." And the superintendent would say: "Okay, ahh we'll work it out, and we'll get him off of the machine." (S: Uh huh) And, you know, he had to have a reason to get me off, because, there was a union at the time; (S: Right) but, if he pushed it hard enough, I wouldn't want to stay there. But the machine tender, you know, he was the kingpin; (S: Uh huh) and he would make sure that nobody was going to learn his job. It was very difficult, in those days, to learn how to be a machine tender; unless the machine tender said to you: "Ray, I'm going to teach you and make you a machine tender." Because, otherwise, you couldn't learn. You couldn't go down the wet end. They wouldn't let you.

S: So, it was really like an apprenticeship, almost; (B: Of course it was) and they had to, kind of, (B: Ap(- -)) take you on that way.

B: That is correct. They, and normally i-it just, it was just ending at that time, they would select the individual who they wanted to re-, you know, to be the next machine tender. (S: Uh huh) And they would take him and under their wing; and they would train him, and show him all the tricks of the trade, so that he could learn. But, if you weren't on the right side, uhh forget it.

S: So it wasn't in that, in a sense, it wasn't, at that time, that everybody who came into the paper mill came to understand the whole process. (B: Oh no; oh no; not (- -)) Just, (- -) (B: (- -) at that time) you were lucky, because, you (B: You were lucky) started in at the (B: Yeah, oh yeah, and (- -)) right place at the right time, and the guy liked you. [chuckles]

B: (- -) they, they had their own rules and regulations. I used to live on fifty-seven Adams Street, which was, maybe, a five minute walk from the mill. So, I used to walk to work. We rotate shifts, first, second and third. And, when I started on the paper machine, I would go to work with the clothes that I would wear when I worked, and then go home. It was only five minutes from my house, and my machine tender, Ed [Brogel], kept telling me: "Don't wear the same clothes to work that you wear in the mill." And I said: "What's the difference. I live five (- -)" He said: "You're not supposed to. You should change your clothes when you go home, and put them in, your work clothes, in your locker and go home looking decent." And, I always ignored him. I said it's none of his business how I did it. (S: Ahh) But he finally taught me. One day, during the dead of winter, he signaled for me to come down to the wet end of the paper machine, when they were doing a wash-up; and I went down to the wet end of the paper machine; and, the machine tender on this side and the machine tender on that side gave me a very good bath with hoses. And then, afterwards, he said to me: "Well, Ray, it's quarter of seven, you can go home now. I hope you don't catch cold." (S: Oh my gosh!) [chuckles] [interviewer laughs] Now, if you come down, when you see me when I leave the mill, I always go out, I look just like this. You wouldn't think I worked in a paper mill, but I do. Because, I change my clothes every day when I leave. (S: [whispering] Oh that's hysterical!) [chuckles]

S: Oh, that's hysterical. And, that was probably because he w-, he wanted to teach you, kind of like a son, he was taking care (- -) [Mr. Beaudry laughs loudly then both laugh] Oh gosh!

B: But that was on-, you know, one of the things that, you know, they did, to, to convince

you to think that, their way. (S: Uh huh) But that's, you know, that's the way the old school was. And, if you were one of these guys who was a favorite of the the boss, and the boss would say to you: "You teach him what to do." Even if you didn't want to. He may have been a rel-relative of the boss or something, and he'd say to the machine tender: "Teach him what to do." Well, the machine tender would go down the one end if they were having trouble, and the guy would go down, he'd stand there and watch them. The machine tender would do something, and he'd say "Okay, go check it now." And the guy would go down the end to check it; and, then, he'd go over and he'd undo what he'd done; and he'd do the right thing to correct the problem. Oh yes. [chuckles] (S: Wow!) So the guy would go down, and [then] he'd come back, he'd check, he'd say: "It's fine now," he'd say, "okay?" [clears throat] Then, if it ever happened to this guy, and he did the same thing, he'd [tell] the machine tender "No way." [laughs] (S: Oh my gosh!)

S: And so, people were probably pretty aware of these kinds of things happening.

B: Oh yeah, aft-after you were in the mill for a while, you would learn. You would learn. [coughs] You'd run around the back side of the machine; and you'd watch the machine tender, to see what he was doing to correct the problem. [interviewer laughs] But that, the Ed [Brogel], and John [Komarowski], (S: Oh God) uhhm, uhhh, Wilfred [Sear], those people they, they were the end of that era. That, you know, they were the last ones of (S: Uh huh) those hard-nosed old-timers who were still hanging on to, you know, to the idea that it was a crafts; and everybody shouldn't be taught it; and that, that was really the end of it. It, it ended in the middle fifties; whereas there, there was such a big turnover of help starting to come in that, you know, that they just could no longer do that.

S: So why, th-, you think it changed because there was a turnover of (B: Oh yeah) staff. (B: Yeah) That's the reason?

B: Be-because of the ch-, the changing of the help [no-o-o-w], all of the, that age group retiring - (like (S: Uh huh) Ed [Brogel], John [Komarowski]) - all these people going out; and the, the influx of new people, and uhh, at that time it was changing. Let's see, Ed [Brogel] and gahh them guys, eh, they were probably uh, probably at that time in the city it, it might have been a mixture of German [clears throat] and Irish who were the machine tenders; and it was changing. The French were coming in; and, the French were starting to take over in the, in those top classifications. And they just didn't carry over, you know, the traits of the, of the old-timers. They were more liberal in, you know, trying to teach people what to do. (S: Mmm) Because they felt, you know, "It's easier if I'm gone and something happens and I have somebody here who can correct it," (S: Um hm) you know, "that's going to keep me out of trouble." So. (S: Um hm) Th-they were a little bit more liberal in their teachings. (S: Um hm) Today, that's, that's a thing of the past. That doesn't happen at all. (S: Hm)

S: So how did the, um, old guard react to this whole new (- -) [both talk]

B: Uhhh, some of the old time, [clears throat] some of the old-timers who were still there, [coughs] you know, didn't think it was right. They said, "It's going to be the end of the", you know, "of the trade." [clears throat]

S: Would that bring up ethnic um, (B: Ahh no, because a-) animosities?

B: As I said, I, I think it was in, in the middle part of the fifties that the, the group was changing; the machine tenders group was changing over from German and Irish to French. (S: Uh huh) French and Polish. It was a mixture, at that time of, of French and Polish that were coming in, in, in the majority for those jobs. (S: Huh!)

S: Now they'd been around for a long time, the (B: Oh yeah) French and the Polish; (B: They used to, used to (- -)) and they just started to get into the mills or what?

B: Well, n-n-normally, well it took me, [pauses] took me what? Took maybe me, myself fifteen years to become a machine tender. (S: Oh okay) That's how long I had to work on that machine (S: Uh huh) before I was able to move up to that job. (S: Uh huh) About fifteen years. (S: Uh huh) And I became a machine tender - I forget what year it was - but I worked as a machine tender up until 1965. I had finally made it, and they closed the Chemical Paper. And I had to go: I went to American Writing and got a job there; and I had to start all over again! I had start at the bottom of the ladder, again, as a third hand, and work my way back up (S: Even though you'd (- -)) the ladder. (S: (- -) you'd had all that experience) Oh yeah, it didn't make any difference, because, at that time, seniority was really entrenched in the contract; so there was, what they call today, the line of progression on the paper machine. (S: Um hm) See, in the old days they didn't have that. In the im-, and before fifty-two - it was in the early, the late nineteen hundreds - [clears throat] the machine tender did his hi-, his own hiring, in most cases, and his own firing. (S: Mm) He'd hire the people he wanted to hire; and and, of course, if I was Irish, I hired Irish people - if I was Polish I hired Polish people. And that's how you got the different ethnic groups, you know, within the manufacturing areas; because th-they built their own little kingdoms. (S: Little empires) That is correct.

S: Was it different ethnicities in different mills, primarily? (B: Oh yeah, i-it(- -)) I mean, was Chemical Ge-German and Irish, and another one might be French?

B: Yeah. Oh yes, yeah. That's the, that's the way that they were. There was no really basic pattern in all the different mills, because there were just too many mills, (S: Um hm) and, you know, it all depended upon the, the owner of the company - who he preferred. Uh Parsons Paper, they felt that the Polish people were, you know, the best workers that they were. (S: Huh!) And you know they, they (- -)

S: So that was a conscious decision?

B: Of course it was. In a, a Valley Paper Company, uh, they felt the Irish were the laziest people in the world; and, they used to have a sign in the mill that said "No Irish need apply". (S: In Valley Paper, not (- -)) [chuckles] (S: Hm) So, you know, each company was different.

S: And who were they hiring primarily?

B: At Parsons Paper, it was mostly French and Polish people. (S: And Valley was (- -)) I mean Valley was French and Polish. Valley was French and Polish. American Writing, because

they had so many mills in Holyoke, it was a mixture you know. There was no set pattern. (S: Um hm) There was no set pattern, because they had so many different mills, in the city. (S: Um hm) It was just, just wasn't pinpointed; but in the old days, you know, the, the machine tender was the boss; and eh he was completely and totally responsible.

S: And so, probably because people are different - in some of them it was a conscious decision - (B: That's right) that we only (B: That's right) want these kind of people; and, in some of them, it was just because of who (B: Yep) they knew; (B: Right) and in some of them (- -)

B: And, you know, i-i-it's, it's strange, because, if you look at some of the history of the Papermakers Union, and you check some of the records - as, as to the different ethnic groups that were within the in-in-in-industry - and then you check the, the, the, the uh ethnic groups within the community, and you see how they climbed the ladder in the paper industry (and I imagine it was the same in any industry); as they progressed up the ladder in the industry, they progressed up the ladder in the community. (S: Um hm) They came from the lower wards to the higher wards and further up. [clears throat] And that's how, you know, but that's the way that they both worked. As (S: Um hm) you progressed, uh, I started as a third hand. I lived on fifty-seven Adams Street. When I finally made it to a machine tender, I bought a house out in West Holyoke. (S: Right; huh) [chuckles] (S: Interesting) As you climbed the ladder, you moved out of the core of the city, out to, you know, what was supposedly the better parts of the city. (S: Right)

S: How did that play itself [Mr. Beaudry clears throat] out in how people worked with each other in the mill? Was there animosity? Was, did people get along? Did (- -)

B: Oh no. There, there was always you know the pro-, the problems within the mill of, you know, the new kid coming in; and you know uh "He ain't never going to go nowhere. He's a deadbeat." Same thing as it is today. (S: Um hm) But today, you have exactly the same situation in the mills that you had then. You know, it's the same thing today. Today, the vast majority of people who are, are coming into the paper industry, are the Spanish people. They're, they're the, that's the large majority. And they are progressing, you know, on the machine; just as the Irish did, just as the (S: Yeah) Polish did, just as the French did.

S: It's so amazing how few people see that parallel. [both talk] (B: That's right, but it's there!) It's really there. (B: It is!) [Mr. Beaudry chuckles] In so many ways, in the city. (B: Yeah, that's correct!) [Mr. Beaudry laughs] Like you say, in the streets and everything! [laughing]

B: But if, you know, i-if someone takes and they look at the history o-of, you know, o-of what happened in industry, (and i-it doesn't have to be paper, it could be textile or anything else) you know, (S: Mm) you'll see that i-a-that's the way it goes. (S: Mm) That's the way it happens. (S: Mm) But the paper industry in the Holyoke was, you know, it was unique, in the sense that, the, because there were so many companies (and they were all trying for the same thing, you know, to be the best at what they did), and because you, you know, you had a company like American Writing, (which was the largest manufacturer of fine grade papers in the world and had the most modern laboratories and everything else) (S: Mm) eh, you know, that's what made the city unique. You had Whiting's Paper Company, that made the finest stationery in the world;

(S: Mm) you know, won a gold medal in, in uh, in, in London; (S: Mm) uh and all of these companies competing to be the best. (S: Um hm) And, and then you look and you say, let's look at Parsons Paper. They started in 1851, and they're still in business today. Must be doing something right. (S: Um hm) [chuckles]

S: Yeah, it's really interesting to go through. I went on a tour there, too. It's so much, th-, y-, it's exactly the same kind of things that, that, (B: If you walked (- -)) that's in the exhibits from the (- -)

B: If you walked into Parsons Paper today, it's the same thing - (S: Yeah) as, you know, going through this, this book about the American Writing (S: Right) with the rag (S: Right) the, the, r-, the r-, the only thing they don't do, is they don't hang (- -)

S: They have a little fancier knife in the rag room. (B: Yeh) Things like that, (B: Yeah) but (- -)

B: The only thing that's different is, they don't hang the paper in the loft no more. (S: Um hm) It's all machine dried but, (S: Uh huh) you know, (S: I see) it's, you go in there and, and they got the bleach boilers and they got the rag cutter, like you have down at Heritage (S: Um hm) Park. (S: Um hm) And, it's like walking into the past. (S: Um hm) And, there are very few of those companies left in the United States (S: Right) that prepare their own rags. (S: Right) Very few of them. (S: Huh) I forget if it's two or three that are left; that actually prepare their own rags for making paper. (S: Huh, that's interesting)

S: Is that the only one in the city that does that?

B: Oh yes. That's the only one. In the city today we have, you know, Parsons Paper which is a rag, a real rag, content mill; we have [Linweave], which is a specialty mill because they make all different colors and a lot of grades; and then you have Sunoco, which is a board mill. You have three representative today of all the twenty-six mills that you had, you know, (S: Mm) a long time ago. (S: Um hm) [chuckles] There's one of each left. (S: That's it) Yeah, that's right. (S: There's only three) There's only three left. Only three mills, three companies left in the city of Holyoke that manufacture paper.

S: Right. There's others that process paper after that but (- -)

B: There's a lot of converting, (S: Right) but there's only three manufacturing groups left in the city.

S: Where's it gone?

B: Well, most of them th-, th-, you know, they didn't pull up and move down South. (S: Um hm) That, that doesn't happen with a paper mill. They close, uhh the Chemical Paper closed. They had seven paper machines. Five [four nears] and two cylinder board machines. A lot of people tried to get a group together to buy it, to keep it running. That didn't pan out. So then the machines were sold. They were sold, you know, piecemeal. Some were sold piecemeal, some

were sold outright. I think, uhh probably, the [four near] machines, probably most of those went down to uh some Caribbean countries. (S: Um hm; um hm)

S: How did the union [Mr. Beaudry clears throat] deal with all these closing up? Was that something (- -)

B: Well I, when they closed that particular plant, there was, what, 550 people that lost their jobs. But, because at that time there were a, you know, a good majority of paper mills left in the city, a, a good portion of them were a-absorbed. (S: Um hm) There were some people who just never got a job; and that's because they belonged to a, an ethnic group. Uh there was a fellow who worked there, by the name of Mr. Goulet, who used to handle all of the waste which came into the mill - which was reused in the cylinder machines. And, what Mr. Goulet did is, he hired all French speaking people. So all the people who worked a-, for him were French speaking. That's all they could speak. They couldn't speak English. (S: Mm) A-, not all of them, but a majority of them. (S: Um-hm) So when it came time and the mill closed and you tried to find these people jobs, it was very difficult. (S: Um hm) In fact, the union did a study with the Division of Employment Security to see, you know, what happened to all these people. And that particular group, and the group that was in the age of fifty-five on up, those were the two that we never really could (S: Uh) really secure good steady jobs for. (S: Um hm) All of the younger people, the um, some went on to better jobs, some went on to equal jobs, uh some took less;, but the, the French and those that were in fifty-five u-, and on up, those were the hardest ones (S: I bet) to, you know, to do anything for. (S: Um hm) And that's happened a lot in the city of Holyoke. It happened when, you know, when they closed the Chemical; it happened when they closed the Linden; it happened when they closed the [Crocker-McKellan]; it happened when they closed the Mt. Tom; it happened when they closed the Riverside; it happened when they closed Whiting. It's happened an awful lot. (S: Um hm) An awful lot. (S: Um hm) And there was an awful lot of history that's, you know, in those mills ah; lot of good times, lot of bad times.

S: What have been the big um, the big issues for the union? The kinds of things that they've been working on or th- (- -) What [speaks too softly to hear] (- -)

B: Well, they, the big issue in the early days was to eliminate Sunday night work. (S: Um hm) Get away from Sunday work. And it's ironic, because today, not in this area, but down South, because it, that all finally filtered down there;, whereas Sunday became a premium day. They, the, paper mills in the South, they run seven days a week. So, but they get double time for it. But they have to work. They have no choice. (S: Uh huh) But now, what's happening down South is, the companies are saying "We still have to run seven days, but we don't think we should have to pay you premium pay anymore." And that issue, which is over a hundred years old, is right back in the forefront again; and that's all you see in our, in our union paper all the time - that Sunday work is becoming an issue again. (S: Oh my God!) See, we don't have that problem, because the, this was an issue with the papermakers when they first started in Holyoke; so our contract says "Sunday work shall be voluntary." You don't have to work if you don't want to. So we don't have that problem. And if you do work, then it's double time; if you don't work, no problem. But down South it's mandatory seven days a week. Here it's not. (S: Um Hm) But that issue, which they fought and fought and fought, (S: That was one of the earliest ones) and now it's back again.

S: Did they form around that issue originally or (- -)

B: Oh yes. (S: Uh huh) Oh yeah, yeah. That's, that, if you read the, if you read the history of the Papermakers Union, that's really what, what brought them all together - because they kept saying "We've got to have a day of rest," you know and blah, blah. (S: Um hm) And that was the main issue which drew everything together, y-. (S: Um hm) What you see with, the Papermakers Union, e-everyone, i-i-it started in 1884 officially. But that's not when it really started. When it really started was (- -) [pause: 5 sec.] [both talk] When that gentleman, Mr. Charles (- -) [pauses] See that's when the first Papermakers Union started was in eighteen hundred and seventy-four. But that one didn't last very long. And [sighs] the issue then was sickness, because when an employee was out of work in those days he got nothing. If you broke your arm in the mill, you got nothing. So that (S: Wow) was a, a, that was a, a, a, a uh like a benevolent society for helping out each, uh each other. (S: Um hm) And that's what it had started as. (S: Um hm) And that one there, it ran into some difficulties; and no one really knows if, if it was because a guy was a gambler or, or anything else; but we've done some research on, you know, names that are in there as to uh where they worked and things of that nature; a-and what he says in that letter that he had written is absolutely true a-about those people, you know; but uh whether or not that was really the downfall of the PMPU, Papermakers Protective Union, ah it's hard to say; but that's what it started as. It started as a, a group of people trying to help (S: Um hm) each other in time of need.

S: And the help was, I'm, without reading this now. The help was um to support people who, to change the laws in the mills (No, no, no) [both talk] Not to change policy, just to support people.

B: It was, it was, it was to support them while they were out (S: Right) and they weren't getting anything. (S: Right) And that's what it started as, (S: Um hm) a-and, you know, and that was what they were trying to accomplish. And they did ehh, apparently, from w-ar-, some articles we were able to check out in The Transcript and everything else, you know, it had worked. (S: Hmm) But when Mr. Charles Goodenough ah left, I don't know if it really fell apart because (S: Mmm) he left and there was nobody there to watch it anymore or what. (S: Hm) But (S: Interesting) that is when it really started. (S: Um hm) But it only lasted a few years; and then in eighteen hundred and eighty-four, that's when the real effort was made you know to organize, to get elimination of Sunday night running.

S: Um hm, and that was for everybody or that was (--)

B: Oh yes, oh yeah. The, the, the people who started it, they assessed themselves; they put out an organizer to, to go out all around and organize as many mills as they possibly could. Ahh, I don't know if I ever brought a copy of, of this one down to ah the Heritage Park. [both talk] (S: I don't think I've seen that) That was the one that we put out, you know, and that tells the whole story o-o- from an old papermaker, a-a-and it goes through the, the entire history you know, (S: Uh huh) of it. But when they started in 1884, that was for the elimination of Sunday night o-, to get Sunday night off as a day of rest.

S: Did they have to strike in order to get that or not?

B: They begged, they pleaded, they, they made all kind of appeals. U-um, in fact, in one of these books [turns pages] it shows one of the, this - is - was a group of manufacturers that met; and they appeared at that convention of the manufacturers (the union did),⁰ and they made an appeal (S: Huh) to give them Sunday night off. And some of the people who owned the mills you know agreed with them; but they said "I can't do it unless my competitors do it." So, finally, the papermakers all got together, at Parsons Hall, down at the bottom of the street. And they met; and they merely sent out a circular letter; and it's in that book, to all of the manufacturers that said "On such-and-such a night," I think it was July 19th, "we are no longer going to report for work on Sunday night." (S: Um hm) And then they said "Please respond." Some of the manufacturers did. A lot of them didn't, but they went around to the help and they said to the help in the mills, "Don't bother to come to work Sunday night," uh and they knew they had won their battle. (S: Great) And that was, (S: Great) that was the beginning.

S: And then the union held together after that. They didn't (--)

B: Then the union held together. Right. (S: That's great) Then they held together. Then they started working on other issues. That was their, their main concern at that time was, you know, Sunday night. They wanted a day of rest. And y-, and you can't really get the picture of what they're saying unless you go back and you, you look into Mrs. Green's book, and you read about some of the conditions that they had to live in. You know where there were fifteen, twenty, thirty people living in an apartment, with no windows, (S: Um hm) one door. (S: Um hm) [chuckles] And then you realize, you say, "Well, I can understand why there was frustration and, and things of that nature." (S: Um hm, um hm) But there were some good manufacturers. There were some good manufacturers who treated their, their, some of their employees right. And there were some who, you know, took care of their, their favorites. Uh, Parsons Paper, [coughs] in the minutes of the meetings, of the company meetings, it tells you where they gave a Mr. Pomeroy a gold watch. A machine tender for twenty faithful years. But they never gave one to a woman rag sorter. It never says that they gave one to a you know, a, a, label girl or a third hand. Always machine tenders. (S: Um hm) Those were the people who they took care of. (S: Um hm) Because the machine tender was their eyes and their ears. He's the one who watched the mill for them when they weren't there. (S: Right) [chuckles] (S: Right; hm) [continues chuckling]

S: Right, and you were talking before, I'm trying to remember, I didn't, I don't remember all of that article which I read a long time ago about um the Papermakers Union originally being sort of hierarchical itself (B: Well, they) or (- -)

B: The, the papermakers, n-, this, the problem was in the beginning, the machine tenders felt that they were the artistocrats of the trade. And th-, they didn't want anyone else. They wanted only the machine tenders.

S: To be in the union?

B: To be in the union. When it came time for the Sunday night thing, they branched out.

They got the [beader] engineers, and the backtenders, and they took some of those people to the meetings too, because they knew they couldn't do it alone. (S: Uh huh) And then after that, they took the [beader] engineers into the union. (S: Huh) And, the backtenders, they, they wanted them, but they didn't want them: so they gave them a separate lodge. They called them the Ivy Lodge of Backtenders. But they couldn't meet with the machine tenders. They had to meet by themselves; and whatever they did was subject to the approval of the machine tenders. Because, you see, the machine tenders didn't want to lose control; and they felt that they were the, the, you know, the top dogs.

S: They didn't want to democratize (B: Th-, th-, that's right) it too much.

B: Th-, they didn't want to, you know, give anybody any say in what was going to happen, (S: Uh huh) only them. They wanted to be in (S: Uh huh) complete control. And that was eventually their downfall.

S: It was probably a threat to them, to b-, the idea of a union, since they were in such a (B: Um hm) comfortable position (Yeah) as it was.

B: It wa-, there was a, a, a local, up in New York state (I forget which local it was), but they formed their own machine tenders union. (S: Mm) Uh, and they, you know, they didn't want to bother with the Papermakers Union because they said "You're going to, you're going to kill the trade by allowing other people to eventually come into it." (S: Mm) And, you (S: Um hm) know, for many, many years, we used to have, in the hall here, a box about this big, and it had a handle on it, and it had a cover that lift up here, and there was a round hole, and you lift the other side, and in here there was all little white marble balls and black marble balls; and I could never understand what it was. And then I went to one of the old-timers, I think it was Bill McFadden, I said: "Bill, what the hell is this thing?" [interviewer laughs] Said, "You don't know what that is Ray?" I said "No." He said "When a guy used to come up and make application for membership," I said, "Yeah," he said "the guy would wait out in the hall. And they would say 'We have an application from, ah, Ray Beaudry, who wants to become a member of this local union, and we're going to vote on it now.'" And he said if there was fifty or a hundred people in the hall, they'd pass around the box, and you'd put your hand in, you'd take a ball out and you'd put it in. If there was one black ball, the guy was blackballed. He couldn't become a member. The rest, if they were all white, well then he became a member of the local union. [chuckles] (S: Oh my God!) [still chuckling] That's what it was for. I never knew. That's down at our museum now, in Nashville, Tennessee. I sent it down there. But that's what it was.

S: Is that where the term blackballed came from? (B: That is correct my dear) [Mr. Beaudry laughs] I never heard of anything like that! Oh my God!

B: [Still laughing] And that's what it was for. I never knew. I seen it there for years and years; and finally, I just got curious enough that I asked Bill (S: Wow) McFadden; and Bill (S: Wow) McFadden told me what it was for. (S: That's amazing) So if there was one black ball, Ray, that was it. Ah-, [snaps fingers] now I got it. [interviewer laughs] (S: Oh my God!) He was blackballed. He couldn't become a member. But as the union became a little bit more democratic and more liberal, that was done away with, because there, the union had its peaks and

it had, you know, its downfalls. (S: Um hm) And every time it had a downfall, they had to do something, (S: Hm) they had to become a little more liberal to get their membership back up. (S: Um hm) They were you know, they were always having problems; and the, the international, (not our international, because this local was the international, but other), the AFL-CIO would send in Polish interpreters; and, you know, they were, there were attempts at organizing Polish unions, French unions, (S: Hm) Irish unions, all trying to get their own group because they couldn't get what they felt was the proper pres-, representation from the Papermakers. (S: Hm) And then in 1937 (- -) You see, what used to happen is, when the Papermakers went in for negotiations, they'd go in and they'd negotiate; and the ah manufacturers knew the machine tenders were here for one thing: the machine tenders. So they would offer the machine tenders, we'll say, fifteen cents, and we'll give six cents to everybody else. Fine, you got a deal! And that was it. (S: Right) But then, (S: Right) as people got a little bit smarter, and in 1902, I think it was, when they had the great big strike in Holyoke because the women said "No way! We ain't going to buy that no more!" Then they had to start (- -)

S: When was this?

B: I think it was 1902 when they had the big strike.

S: Because women weren't in the union, was that why?

B: They were in, but they had no voice. (S: Uh huh) They had no voice in what was, what was being done. They may ap-, I think it was uh seventy-five cents, uh the rates were brought up to seventy-five cents a day for regular help, a dollar a day for machine tenders and fifty cents for women. And women were in the majority. (S: whispers) Wow) They had the votes. So the women said "No way. We aren't going to buy this crap any more." (S: Uh huh) And they didn't! [laughs]

S: You don't hear about these things very much. (B: chuckles) Right; right) You really don't! (B: Right)

B: And, in, in, in the history of the Papermakers Union there is a statement by a, I forget, the guy who was president, I can't remember which one it was, but he said, "Those poor misguided women. They didn't understand about unions." [laughs] (S: Yeah; right; geez) Ahhh, but they understood. (S: Geez) And more than once, they helped to straighten it out. (S: Uh huh) And then in thirty-seven, I think it was 1937, there was finally the, the splitting of the group. [clears throat] Those people, who, you know, felt that they weren't getting proper representation, went to the international, (because there was an international union then, it was no longer here in Holyoke), and they said, "We want our own local union. We want to be able to represent ourselves during negotiations." So the international sat down and they set up jurisdictional boundaries. They said "Okay, everybody, who has anything to do with the actual making of the paper, will belong to the Papermakers Union. Anybody, who has anything to do with the finishing will, belong to Local 226." And that was the jurisdictional boundaries that abe-, were set up in thirty-seven; and those are the guidelines that the two local unions have operated since then. (S: Hm) Fact, in Holyoke, it's the only place in the United States and Canada where, within one company, there are two separate local unions from the same international. (S: Um

hm) There's no other place in the United States today, (S: Hm) where you have two local unions representing United Paperworkers International Union.

S: And why, why were the finishers separate? Th-, because they weren't (- -)

B: You mean why were they separate (- -)

S: Why did they ask for a separate (- -)

B: Because they weren't getting proper resum-, representation during negotiations by (- -)

S: But that didn't count, the women in the rag room didn't get counted in that, because they're not finishers or (- -)

B: Yes they are. They are finishers.

S: Oh they are! (B: Oh yeah) Because they're initial, they're an initial process that (- -)

B: No, all, all the women, there are no women in our local union. And there haven't been women in our local union since nineteen hundred and thirty-seven, (S: Mm) when (S: Mm) the two groups separated.

S: Okay. Because I always think of finishers as the end process (B: No, that's (- -)) but I suppose it's (- -)

B: That includes the, the knifemen, the cutters, the rag, the rag sorters, uh the sealers, the women [the counters], everything.

S: And, and is that all women?

B: Oh no, no. That's all the m-, (S: Or it's men) no. Today the women are way down in the majority because, (- -) [sighs] it's not the thing to say. It's because they don't, they don't sort paper the way that they used to in the old days, by hand - take every sheet out that was no good - they don't do that no more. So, there are very few women who work in the paper industry in Holyoke.

S: Because now it's a big ma-, operating big machinery to do it.

B: Right. Right. And they have cutters that automatically throw defective sheets out and things of that nature. (S: Right; interesting; interesting) [chuckles]

S: So it's a, it's a mix now, in that union. That must have been interesting in the days, when there was a mens' [women] (B: Oh yes) basically and a women's union. (B: Oh yes) It must have set up some interesting dynamics. [both laugh]

B: Ah, th-there's the name of the woman, I, I forget it (that's in the paper that I'm writing or

if it's in one of the uh other ones), and it gives her name; and she was an Irish lady; and I went through the American Writing records, personnel records, trying to find her folder, because they have a lot of the folders that, that go back to the early eighteen nineties of people who worked there. And I was looking (S: You mean employer's fo- (- -)) for her (- -) (S: Folders?) Yeah. Uh, their personnel record. (S: Uh huh) You know when they hired them, their application and everything else. (S: Uh huh) And I was looking for her, her first name is Margie, I forget what her last name was, but uh I couldn't find it in the thing, in the files. I wanted to, you know, see if I could get something out of her personnel record about her background. (S: Right) [coughs] I think he said she was a rebel, if I remember correctly. [chuckles]

S: You couldn't find, you couldn't find it in, her whole folder was gone, is that it?

B: No I couldn't find, I t-, well, there was so many files (S: There's so many, that they're (- -)) that are down there; because they had them from every division that they ever had; and eh all they did was move them down into the basement.

S: So did they keep [Mr. Beaudry coughs] careful records of people who were (B: Oh yeah) involved in the union, I bet. (B: Oh yeah) A-, on their activity. (B: Oh yeah, yeah)

B: Fact, some of the records that we got out of the um, uh American Writing - when, when they gave me all of the personnel records and everything else, hey gave me all the labor records; and in there, um Harold Martin, who was the representative of the manufacturers, would give each company a, a biography of the officers of the local union and, what it was they were looking for. This guy wants to be, some day, a tower boss. It's something we should look into. Ah this individual does have potential for being, you know, (- -) [chuckles] (S: Um hm, um hm; interesting)

S: Now let's see. So, we've only, I, you've only mentioned one strike so far. Is that right? One threat of a strike and one other str- (B: Uhh) [Mr. Beaudry coughs] strike [unclear], the women going on strike.

B: In the early days there was probably, what, one, there might have been th-, two or three. But they were, you know, they were strikes; because, in those days, when they went out on strike it was somewhere between four and six thousand people. And that would cripple the city. (S: Right) Some-, somewhere between four and six thousand people and, you know, uhh, the Papermakers didn't like strikes. (S: Right) The machine tenders were mostly a conservative group; [clears throat] and, (S: Uh huh) you know, they were looking out for their own interests; and their own interest wasn't going out on strike. (S: Um hm) And they would do things to avert strikes, uh, you know, (S: Hm) that uh they wouldn't normally, you wouldn't normally do. But they uh eh, it was either two or three that they had that were real bad, that crippled the city. (S: Ah) Ah in the early days. And that was, a-and that was mainly because of internal problems, you know. Because they weren't taking care of everyone that they should have taken care of. (S: Um hm) And then, in, I think it was 1902, when the, the Papermakers and the Pulp and Sulfide Workers merged into one big international union. I think that lasted six months. And that all went to hell. [chuckles] (S: Hm) But that also happened here in Holyoke. Which is an interesting part of the history of the, of the union and what happened in the city at that time with

that group. But uh, the women, you know, they were mistreated. And that's why I like Harry, Harry's paper, because Harry told it like it was. (S: Right) He told it like it was. Everybody else, even our own international i-, i-, you know, in their, in their book One Hundred Years of Progress uh (- -)

S: Oh I'm sure! They don't want to represent (B: Course not) themselves as (B: Course not) [unclear] history of that (B: Course not) discrimination. (B: Of course not) [both laugh] No way! Yeah.

B: But if you ain't going to print, print the truth, and if you're going to change history to suit yourself, then don't bother writing it. (S: Right) Leave it alone. Do it right: good, bad or indifferent. (S: Right) And that's the way that it should be; and, you know, whenever I dealt with s-, any student ever ask me today or anything, I tell them, "Hey, that's the way they were." They may have been wrong, but that's the way that they were.

S: Well, that's important to know, because (B: Of course it is!) otherwise w-, you know, how are you going to deal with the present or (- -)

B: That is correct. That is correct. It gives you a better understanding of everything. And, if you try to change history, you know, because you think "Well, we don't want everybody to know that we discriminated," you know. I used to get uh-h [clears throat] (- -)

S: Then you're just as bad!

B: That's right. I used to get a big kick, because when I, when I got eh really hooked on the history of the union, I took the old minute books home; and I was r-r-reading them to find and, I, I read them maybe three or four times, and it was one thing in there which caught my eye when I read it. Didn't understand it, but I said "I'll get back to it." And what it said was, was, that a brother got up from Chemical Paper and he made a motion on the hall floor that everyone vote in favor of refusing to work with the niggers that are being imported by the Chemical Paper from Americus, Georgia. And then the business agent got up and he said "No, you've got to reaffirm, re-, restate that uh motion, and I want you to make a motion to the effect that the business agent investigate the problem at the Chemical Paper." So they changed the motion, but that's the way it was put into the minute book. So then we had to do some checking. I did, because, I wanted to know, you know, (S: Uh huh) what was the problem. (S: Mm) Well, Chemical Paper owned row houses; and, at that particular point in time, they were having trouble getting help. They couldn't get no help into the mills. So, they sent someone to Americus, Georgia to bring some blacks in, so that they would have help in the mills. [coughs] They couldn't get them an apartment nowhere. So, they evicted some of the families that were in their apartments (S: Huh) to house the black families. That's what brought (S: Oo wowee) the problem about. [laughs] (S: Wowee; uh) But you know if you, if you just read [unclear], oh my God. Then going through, I forget which papers it was that someone gave to me, I, I read in there a, a l-, a letter from the Holyoke Central Labor Council, this organization, to the Board of Health and to the Board of Assessors in the City of Holyoke, telling them not to grant a license to a group of Chinese people who were trying to open a Chinese restaurant on Delight Street, because nobody would want yellow people handling their food. [chuckles] (S: When was this?) From the Central Labor

Council. (S: When was this?) In the twenties. [laughs]

S: So there was a Chinese restaurant over (B: Right where it (- -)) there in the twenties? (B: Right where, right where it's located) In the twenties? (B: Today) Oh my God! (B: You know the one that's over, I know th-) Yeah!

B: Exactly the same place. [both talk] (S: Isn't that interesting) Is that ironic? [laughs] (S: Oh yeah! I didn't know about tha-, anything back then; my God!) [continues laughing]

S: It hasn't been continuous since then. I'm sure. (B: [still laughing] Excuse me?) It hasn't been continuously a Chinese restaurant [both talk] (B: No, no, no) by any means. (B: In fact that one, that one just opened) was a shoe store and all kinds of (- -) (B: Yes) Right. (B: That one just opened) That's interesting.

B: It is. But (S: Hm), you know, that was the way they thought in those days. (S: Uh huh) That's the way that they thought.

S: Is there s-, stuff like that happening now, w-with Puerto Ricans in the mills, or, or (- -)
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B: Well, I, I, I don't know if that happens in the m- (- -) Well, it's like anything else. Some of the people who work at [Linweave], (S: Uh huh) some of the Spanish people, are some of the first Spanish families that came to the City Holyoke. Like the Mendozas, the Riveras and the [Zayas]. Now these were the some of the very first ones that came into the City of Holyoke. Now the Mendozas and the Riveras, they worked at [Linweave] maybe fifteen years. (S: Mm) It wasn't [Linweave] then, it was Brown Company. Now Mendoza and Rivera have retired. Mr. Mendoza owns a home on Maple Street that he bought. A four-family home. He worked in the paper mill all his life. Rim- uh Mr. Rivera owned a two-family home on Maple Street. He is retired [not], last year I think it was, sold his home and moved back to Puerto Rico. Ah Victor [Zayas] started working in the mills, Whiting Paper Company. Eh, he worked his way up through the industry. He's a boss at [Linweave] today in the [beader] room. He's in charge of the [beader] room. (S: Hm) Then you have some Spanish people who come into the mill who don't want to work. You know. There's, there's no, it's no different today than it was in the past. (S: Um hm) You have the same thing, you have people who want to better themselves, and who want to move; (S: Um hm) and there are some who just don't want to, (S: Um hm) and some that just have to learn what the progress is, you know. A-and it's the same thing today. It's no different. (S: Um hm) It's the same, same thing. (S: Um hm) The young fellow that's taking my place this week that I'm out, his father is the Rivera that retired. And his, I talked to him [finally], you know, and his philosophy is is that I learn from my mother and father; I don't take nothing unless I earn it. That's the way he was brought up. (S: Um hm) That's the way he was brought up. (S: Right, a whole range of people) [pause: 3 sec.] [Style] and everything else that they provided housing for certain people. And, as I was going through some of the old records, I found pictures of blocks and pictures of buildings, and houses. So I started to do some checking, through real estate and th-, their records, and I found out that, mostly every paper company provided housing for some of their people. Machine tenders, it was normally a house; a tower boss, it would be a house; a boss machine tender. Other people that they wanted to keep, it would be in an apartment block. And mostly every paper company of (S: Um hm) any size had

properties that (- -)

S: Well, there was a law in, in the city - I'll look it up at the park - but, up until, somewhere in the eighteen seventies, that anybody who built a mill had to, (B: Oh, was there?) had to buy a certain amount of property for residential (B: Ohhh) purposes. (B: I didn't know that there was a law) Yeah. And there was, it, I think it wa-, I, somewhere in eighteen seventy something, that law was taken away. But they, it was part of the, helped develop the city. (B: Yeah) If you're going to buy a mill, you have to also buy this. It was, you know, a way of getting money; but, it also meant that a lot of the mills provided worker (B: Um hm) housing. (B: Yeah)

B: See the parking lot th-, w-, j-across from [Linweave] that is vacant that we don't use for parking, there used to be two, two-family homes, I think, there. The little park on the opposite side, which they leased to the city for [separate] apartments, ahh I think there was a four-family block in there. (S: Mmm) And, and I have the pictures of, you know, of those, those pieces of property. (S: Um hm) Then they owned another block further in but uh (- -)

S: And so, what kind of ways did they use that housing? [both talk]

B: Mostly for their top, top classification (S: Uh huh) people. Machine tenders. (S: Uh huh) [both talk] [Beader] engineers.

S: So it was kind of as rewards for (B: Yeah) people that they (B: Yeah) wanted to (B: Yeah) give favors to but (- -)

B: And the rents, the rents were ridiculous. So little. (S: Really) Yeah. So little.

S: So they didn't have, you know, massive houses for all of the (B: No, oh no) workers kind of situation (B: Oh no) or boarding house [stuff] (B: No) that they operated. [Mr. Beaudry chuckles] Yeah.

B: Oh no. Just for their, for their key people. Mar- I think it was Chemical Paper that was one of the ones that had more housing than any other. But they had more employees at that time. They had more employees.

S: Now (- -)

[end of side one]

S: -per maker, the paper mill owners were much better to the workers, in that there was a whole um kind of seniority in the city among what kind of places you worked in. Is there any truth to that?

B: Well, th-the, the paper munufacturers, y-you know, most of them did, you know, live in the city or very close by; and there was a close relationship, but, you know, not with everyone in the mill, with the person who ran the mill for them while they weren't there: and that was the machine tender. (S: Um hm) [coughs] And in the early, early days the first thing he would do

when he went into the mill was to see the machine tender, "How did everything go?" You know, (S: Um hm) any problems, er uh that's the way it was. As far as I've been able to learn, the wages in the paper industry, at least for, you know, a majority of the top classifications, was always better than it was in the cotton industry in the City of Holyoke. (S: Um hm) And um, they didn't have the problems in the paper industry like they had in the cotton industry because it was owned outside. The wages were controlled by outside. And in Holyoke, what the paper, so many paper mills, they were competitive with each other; especially for trying to get the best help.

(S: Um hm) Stealing from one another for the best help. (S: Um hm) Uhh, I forget which mill it was, but there was one mill when times were bad, and the m-, the s-, owner of the company called them all into the mill, and he said "Lookit, you can either go on slack time or you can take a cut in pay. What do you want to do?" And they took cut in pay. They worked steady while all the other mills in the city, you know, were going down. (S: Um hm) All the other manufacturers were madder than hell at him. (S: Mmm!) And he didn't care. His mill was running full time. Because he could afford to take the orders, because he took, his employees took a cut in pay. And, you know, there was that type of a relationship with a lot of companies. (S: Um hm) A lot of them. (S: Um hm) But there was some, where there was none whatsoever. You know, uh like Mr. Fowler at Valley Paper Company, you know. That was a tough man. That was a tough man. (S: Hm)

S: Now, how did the union deal with this kind of thing? Was the union in that sh-, in that mill when they decided to take a cut in pay in order to keep running?

B: Yeah but it wasn't, it wasn't closed shops. So there was no, nothing you could do. It wasn't a closed shop as it is today. Today (- -)

S: When did that happen?

B: You mean when did they finally get (- -) Oh dear.

S: Like h-how and when can they (- -) (B: Yeah) Oh that's a big question I bet.

B: Yeah. When did they finally get a closed shop contract? Very late. Whoa, what year was it? Fact, I had the original first contract signed. (S: Huh) I, I can't think of the date; and I don't want to say it, (S: Yeah) because it'd be on tape and it'll be wrong. [both talk] And I, I don't know (- -)

S: But is there a range of decade even, or anything like that?

B: It's in the thirties. (S: Uh huh) It's in the thirties, when they fine-, signed the first official contract. B-, b-, before that, there was, up until, and it was in the middle thirties, up until then, there was never a signed contract. And it wasn't until in the thirties, and I forget what year it is, (S: Hm) that they finally signed a contract; and then they had what, you know, what, what's considered almost a closed shop, whereas they could control what happened in the mills. (S: Hm) You see, the union had a unique problem in Holyoke; because American Writing had so

many mills in Holyoke, it was almost an impossibility to service them all, with the so many problems that there were. And, what they finally decided on doing, was setting up in-plant committees in each plant. Because there were so many of them, the business agent couldn't, just couldn't take care of them. (S: Hm) And then after they did that for a while, they found out it didn't work out. Because, the in-plant committees were making agreements with the company, which was contrary to what the contract said. (S: Oh) [laughs; somebody walks in and says good morning] (S: Hi) Good morning. So, after a while, that whole thing started causing so many problems that they, they had to do away with it. Fact, there was a paper that was done by one of the students on that. About the grievance procedures and the problems that they ran into with it. (S: Hm) But, it was interesting when I had all the American Writing records here, because you could read the grievance that the union filed, and then you could read everything which the company had said in reference, and what their strategy would be, and how they would resolve it. (S: Hm; hm) [chuckles] (S: Interesting) And that's why the students used to like it, because they had both sides of the picture. They would know, you know, know everything that was going on. (S: Um hm) Everything that was going on. And I think, if I'm not mistaken, that the uh international has donated all those papers to University of Massachusetts.

S: Under that (B: Yeah) guy, that, Harvey (- -)

B: Harvey Friedman. (S: Right) Because they, you know, they, what they wanted mainly was the artifacts, and all of the things that were uh framed, (S: Mm) and all of the documents, like the yellow dog contracts, (S: Um hm) and things of that nature. (S: Um hm) All the original photographs. (S: Um hm) And, uh, those are all of the things that are in the museum. All of the artifacts that were used by the workers: the hand tools and things of that nature. And they would s- (- -)

S: They're in a museum?

B: Oh yeah. There was a, there's a museum which was set up at our international headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, when they built [both talk] (S: Yeah, that's when you talked about sending the marbles to [chuckles] Nashville) our new international headquarters; that's where all of the artifacts that I had went. They all went to that museum.

S: [talking at same time] Paper is a big industry in Tennessee, too. (B: Excuse me?) Paper is a big (B: Yes it is) industry in Tennessee. (B: Yes it is) Can support (- -) (B: Yes it is) Yup. [both talk] (B: Yes it is)

B: But, you know, anybody that reads the history of the City of Holyoke, and everybody, you know, worked in the paper mill at one time or some representative of their family. Mayor Proulx [pause: 3 sec.] worked in the paper mill, when he was a student.

S: He did? (B: Yeah) Personally.

B: And I think his mother did. Work in a paper mill. You know (- -)

S: How about your family? Was there people (- -) (B: Not a soul) You're the first one. (B:

Not a soul) Huh. (B: No one)

B: [chuckles] (S: Huh) My father was a truck driver all his life. My mother worked at [Pal Blade] in Holyoke. (S: Huh) My father drove for Sullivan Geary for years and years; and then he drove for uh [Shelburne] Storage and Transfer. But he never worked in a mill in (S: Hm) his life.

S: So how did you decide to do that? How did you (- -)

B: Well, I was working, at the time, at the [Gnome] Electric(which was a plastic plant), which was located on Main Street, where they made Christmas lights; you know, the Christmas sets? (S: Uh) And I was working there; [coughs] and then they moved the plant up to Sargent Street (where Sargent Arms now is, the elderly house), and the wages weren't that good, and the paper industry was the, you know, the highest paying industry in the community. And that's, you know, I said the he-, the heck, my brother was working down there on the platform, and I said (S: Uh huh) "I think I'll go down and try it."

S: How old were you?

B: Nineteen. Nineteen.

S: All right. Well I'll let you stop. You, [Mr. Beaudry chuckles] you've been tal-, talking a lot um this is (- -)

[end of tape]